Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, February 22, 2006** **3:00 p.m.**
Date: 06/02/22
The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated January 17, 2006, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

The Clerk: Please be seated.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! Order! Mr. Speaker.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Speaker, accompanied by the officers of the Assembly, entered the Chamber and took the chair]

head: **Prayers**

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Almighty God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Your blessings on all here present. We ask Your guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all of our judgments for the benefit of all Albertans. Amen.

Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of our national anthem. Please join in in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members and Guests:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, Mr. Lorieau. I think Team Canada could have used you in Italy today.

Please be seated.

head: **Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor**

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

The Speaker: Hon. members, while it is not my usual custom to make mention of persons in the galleries, on this day I'm going to make an exception. Seated in the Speaker's gallery is Captain Manuel Panchana of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. If you would rise, sir. On the 15th day of December of 2005 Captain Panchana was leading his platoon on operations near Kandahar in Afghanistan when insurgents detonated an explosive device. He and two of his soldiers were seriously wounded. On the 15th day of January 2006 another incident near Kandahar claimed the life of a Canadian diplomat and seriously wounded three Canadian soldiers. Like Captain Panchana, all five of the wounded soldiers in these two incidents call this province of Alberta their home.

The challenges that they face in their recoveries are deserving of our heartfelt support and encouragement. We are ever mindful that the peace and freedoms we enjoy are borne by the sacrifices and risks made and taken by our men and women in uniform. For those in our Canadian Forces who have recently embarked to Afghanistan for challenging duty in the service of their sovereign and country and for their families we pray for a successful tour and for their safe return. [standing ovation]

Thank you, all. I'm sure that that message will be heard as far away as Kandahar.

The Royal Canadian Artillery Band will now play a brief musical interlude, the details of which are in your program. The RCA Band, Canada's oldest regular army band, was founded in Quebec City in 1879, and it was subsequently stationed in Montreal and Halifax. It has seen service in both world wars and in Korea, and it has travelled across Canada and beyond our borders. Reconstituted in Edmonton in 1997, the band is today under the direction of Captain Brian Greenwood, who will direct from the Speaker's gallery.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Ladies and gentlemen, all rise, please.

Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta awaits.

The Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Norman L. Kwong, CM, AOE, and Mrs. Kwong, their party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

head: **Speech from the Throne**

His Honour: Pray be seated.

Fellow Albertans, welcome to the Second Session of the 26th Alberta Legislature.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Alberta Legislature and 100 years of democracy in Alberta. As we celebrate this great occasion, may we all take a moment to reflect on the tremendous contributions of those who came before us and the great privilege we have been given as servants of this wonderful province and its people. It is therefore an honour to deliver the Speech from the Throne, as it is an honour to serve as this province's Lieutenant Governor.

During the past year I had the opportunity to travel throughout this wonderful province and meet thousands of warm, caring, hard-working people. I joined Albertans in welcoming Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh on a royal visit, and I attended countless events where communities were celebrated and great Albertans were honoured.

It was truly a special year for me and for all Albertans as we celebrated the province's centennial. The year was filled with special events large and small, legacies created in nearly every community, and birthday celebrations that spread across the entire province. These reflected the tremendous pride Albertans have in this province and their optimism for its future.

That optimism is well placed. Alberta is beginning its second

century from an enviable position. By nearly every economic measure Alberta leads the country. Last year Alberta's economy grew the fastest of all Canadian provinces. Alberta had the highest population growth, the lowest unemployment rate, the highest average incomes, and the lowest overall taxes in the country.

The year 2005 also marked a very significant milestone for Albertans. It was the first time in decades that Alberta rang in a debt-free new year. This milestone coincided with the arrival of record-high energy revenues for Alberta. While these create opportunities for our province, Albertans know we can't count on them lasting forever. That's why the government will use this opportunity wisely by setting priorities, creating long-term benefits for Albertans, and keeping an eye firmly on the future.

A Learning Society

Albertans know that building and educating tomorrow's workforce is one of the wisest investments we can make. The creation of a learning society begins with the youngest members of our province. Alberta already has an education system that is respected nationally and internationally with a strong curriculum, excellent teachers, and committed parents and students. This year government will work to further strengthen our education system and ensure that all of our students can take full advantage of the world-class education opportunities available to them.

A series of round-tables with youth from across the province will be held to help us better understand why students leave school early. A high school completion symposium, which will include teens, parents, business leaders, and educators, will help us develop a provincial strategy to increase high school completion rates.

The government took many steps to strengthen the postsecondary system during the province's centennial year. Over 7,000 new learning opportunities, including apprenticeships, have been created, a new endowment fund and new scholarship programs were established, and several capital projects were begun. This year the government will again cover the cost of tuition increases at public postsecondary institutions and will develop a new tuition policy.

We will also introduce measures that reflect all the expenses students face, including accommodation, textbooks, fees, and tuition, to ensure that cost isn't a barrier to students getting an education.

Alberta will take immediate steps to address labour shortages that threaten economic growth. It will increase education in areas of skill shortages by increasing grant support for specific programs. This includes partnering with aboriginal groups and industry on new training projects for aboriginal people. The government will develop a new strategy to increase awareness of Alberta as a destination of choice for skilled immigrants, and it will expand immigrant settlement services and language training and make it easier for foreign-trained professionals to work in Alberta.

Alberta will also plan for the future by developing a strategy to address skills shortages and enhance education levels in Alberta. People with advanced skills, creativity, and education will keep Alberta's economy strong.

A Prosperous Society

A strong economy sustains a high quality of life both now and for the future. The government will work to build a prosperous society by staying true to the fiscal principles that have served this province so well: balanced budgets, no debt, and low taxes. It will remain a leader in Canada for government accountability and transparency, with regular communication with and reporting to Albertans. This year the government will review its fiscal framework to ensure that it positions Alberta well for the future.

The government recognizes that the prosperity that comes from high resource revenues belongs to all Albertans, including future Albertans. That's why Alberta's plan for using budget surpluses includes increasing our savings. Later this month the government will make a substantial $1 billion investment in the heritage fund. Further investment in the heritage fund will be announced in Budget 2006. These investments will ensure that some of today's prosperity is saved for future generations.

A portion of the surplus will also be dedicated to addressing our infrastructure needs. This is an area where government has demonstrated a strong commitment. In recent years Alberta has dedicated billions of dollars to meet the infrastructure needs of the growing economy, a level of support unmatched anywhere else in the country.

In 2006 construction in the province will go on at the fastest rate ever in Alberta's history. Work will begin or continue on about 60 new schools or major school modernizations, 47 major postsecondary capital projects, and 21 major health capital projects. The government will also invest in improving highways throughout the province. Major sections of the Edmonton and Calgary ring roads will open in the next two years, and twinning will begin this year on highway 63 south from Fort McMurray. Altogether we expect to pave 1,000 kilometres of provincial highways in 2006.

The government will create a northern development strategy in which northerners map out their own future. This will ensure that sustainable economic development in this region is supported with infrastructure and human services.

In addition to improving the province's infrastructure, Alberta will work to improve the regulatory environment. This year the government will embark on a comprehensive regulatory review to identify and remove unneeded red tape between Albertans and their government. This will help maintain a competitive edge for business and improve access to services for Albertans.

This year the government will take steps to ensure that forestry, agriculture, and energy, three pillars of the province's economy, are strong and sustainable into the future.

This government understands the challenges facing the forest industry. This is the province's third-largest sector, worth nearly $13 billion to Alberta's economy. On January 1 government updated the province's stumpage system to make it more competitive. We continue to work with industry partners to build a common understanding of their cost and competitiveness issues and to resolve the softwood lumber trade dispute. The government is also working to add value to this renewable resource sector through its continuing $1.8 million commitment to harness innovation as well as ongoing support to the Alberta Forestry Research Institute.

In the agriculture sector, after several difficult years, Alberta's farmers and ranchers are beginning to see new opportunities and revitalization. However, challenges still remain in parts of the agriculture industry, including the grains sector, which faces skyrocketing input costs and low market prices. Alberta will stand alongside its agricultural producers, who face the future with the competitive spirit that built this industry and this province. It will continue to support producers by providing responsive, timely, and straightforward tools to manage risk and add value to all agricultural commodities.

One area of particular promise is the biofuels industry, which offers the potential of sustainable growth and a new market for a primary commodity. At the same time, we will work toward helping the agrifood industry by continuing to press for a substantial agreement in the World Trade Organization that will reduce trade-distorting domestic subsidies and increase access to foreign markets.

This government has and will continue to focus its efforts on rural development to help rural communities become more prosperous and vibrant. Government has already taken many steps to support the rural development strategy, including increasing municipal policing grants, creating the rural affordable housing program, improving rural health facilities, and increasing support to agriculture service boards.

Budget 2006 will allocate new funding to provide stable, long-term support to local rural development projects. This will promote economic development, improve access to health care and learning, enhance environmental protection, and create more opportunities for youth in rural areas.

Alberta will also work with the energy industry to map a new frontier for the resource sector. Conventional crude oil and natural gas are still important to Alberta's economy, but the future belongs to nonconventional energy sources such as the oil sands and natural gas in coal and to value-added products created by refining, processing, and upgrading.

One resource whose enormous potential must be better utilized in Alberta is coal. We wouldn't conceive of burning a barrel of crude oil for heat, not when we know it can be upgraded to make fuels, plastics, and a range of other consumer products, yet that is what is being done today with Alberta's coal, a fuel more abundant than all the province's other hydrocarbons put together. Alberta has coal reserves to last upwards of 1,000 years, and they contain some of the cleanest burning coal in the world. We now know that we can produce from coal many of the things we produce from natural gas and oil.

Coal has the potential to provide plentiful, affordable electricity without the harmful emissions that were once associated with older coal combustion technologies. Coal can help meet long-term demand for feedstock for value-added energy products. The natural gas found within Alberta's coal seams also holds great promise to meet growing demand for natural gas.

The Alberta Energy Research Institute is the lead agency in developing an energy innovation strategy and has identified clean coal as a high priority. This year the government will work with the institute and other partners to explore ways to demonstrate the use of Alberta's coal in creating a number of value-added products, including petrochemical feedstocks. This will expand Alberta's already considerable energy advantage and make Alberta a clean energy leader in the world.

Managing natural resources wisely, including minimizing the environmental impacts of resource development, is a job this government takes seriously.

A Clean Environment

Albertans are blessed with beautiful landscapes that change from prairies to foothills to mountains and from rivers to forests to rangeland. The land, which has given Albertans all that they have, must continue to be the source of life and prosperity for future generations. This principle is at the heart of the land-use framework government is developing. It recognizes that the land supports many uses: resource development, recreation and tourism, agriculture and forestry, and residential. The framework is a multidisciplinary, multistakeholder effort to create a single mechanism for coordinated planning and decision-making.

This year Albertans will be consulted on their values and goals for the land through a series of workshops across the province and a provincial forum.

Another key focus of government in this area is the continuing implementation of the Water for Life strategy. In 2006 the government will develop an inventory of groundwater in the province, and it will make a significant investment in regional drinking water and waste-water systems to ensure safe, sustainable, quality water supplies for all rural communities.

To address broader, long-term environmental issues, the government will hold an environmental youth summit. The summit will bring Alberta youth together to share concerns and ideas to enhance environmental protection in the province.

A Healthy Society

A clean environment is vital to a healthy society. So, too, is improving our health system, one of the government's top priorities this session. This session government will take steps to improve access, sustainability, choice, innovation, and efficiency in Alberta's health care system.

Government will work in collaboration with regional health authorities and stakeholders to improve wait times for medical services. Health care providers and administrators have demonstrated that they can come together to deliver innovative solutions that improve access to services. The Alberta hip and knee replacement project is one such example. It decreased wait times for first orthopaedic consultations from 35 weeks to six weeks and wait times between consultation and surgery from 47 weeks to less than five weeks. In 2006 this approach will be extended to other health areas such as breast cancer care, coronary artery bypass surgery, MRIs and CT scans, and prostate cancer care.

Government will continue to improve the quality of services Albertans receive by expanding the primary care network. In this model, a team of health professionals provides patient-centred support, advice, and care. This year 17 to 19 new primary care networks will begin operation.

This session we will set out clear principles to guide the health system, principles that reflect Albertans' values. They will provide a framework for a comprehensive public health system that fulfills government's commitment to provide high-quality health services to all Albertans and creates greater flexibility and choice. Albertans can be assured that a person's access to needed health care services will never be determined by their ability to pay.

Another key element of the government's health agenda this year is a major offensive in the fight against cancer. Alberta will become a leading centre for cancer expertise in North America. Cancer is a leading cause of death in Alberta. It will strike almost half of all Alberta men and two in five Alberta women during their lifetimes. Over 81,000 Albertans are living with cancer today. By 2025 that number will increase to over 200,000 if we do not take action now.

Research indicates that half of all cancers are preventable. Alberta's goals are to reduce the incidence of cancer by 35 per cent by 2025, reduce the mortality from cancer by 50 per cent by 2025, and ensure that Albertans diagnosed with cancer do not suffer. This will be achieved by making a significant, long-term, strategic investment in prevention, early screening, and research to make Alberta a leader in the fight against cancer and set the stage for a cancer-free future.

Bill 1, the Alberta Cancer Prevention Legacy Act, will establish funding that the Alberta Cancer Board will use to move forward aggressively on cancer prevention, screening, and research initiatives.

A Safe and Caring Society

Albertans want to feel safe and cared for in their communities. This government will take action to ensure that Alberta's communities are strengthened. The government will establish a world-class

system for managing risks and responding to emergencies, including environmental disasters, to ensure that Albertans are protected. We will work with municipal partners to support municipal sustainability.

Last year saw the largest single-year increase in rural and organized crime policing in Alberta in 20 years. This year government will hire more Crown prosecutors and courtroom staff and appoint more judges to ensure that those who are charged with crimes are tried promptly.

The newly established Crystal Meth Task Force will build on the work of law enforcement officials and organizations such as AADAC to help reduce the supply and lessen demand for this dangerous drug.

We will improve our practices to ensure the privacy and security of all personal information held by government.

This government will take steps to ensure that Alberta's most vulnerable citizens are respected and cared for with dignity.

New legislation will be introduced to help protect children who are exposed to the harmful effects of drug manufacturing and trafficking in their homes. It will be the first legislation in Canada to specifically define a drug-endangered child and make it clear that such a child is the victim of abuse.

The government of Alberta remains committed to curbing family violence. We will strengthen legislation to protect people from family violence by broadening the definition of family violence to include stalking, widening the scope of who is protected under the act, and clarifying the conditions for granting emergency protection orders. We will also launch a multidisciplinary team of police officers, legal advisers, and other experts who will respond quickly and effectively to high-risk family violence and stalking cases. The team will assess threats and reduce risks with the goal of preventing serious injury and death.

We will increase financial assistance through Alberta Works to people who cannot work either due to multiple barriers or medical conditions that keep them from being able to find or keep employment.

New standards will be implemented to promote excellence and restore the confidence of seniors and their families in the province's lodges, supportive living and long-term care facilities.

Alberta remains committed to providing a superior quality of life that is inclusive, active, and culturally vibrant. This year detailed planning will begin on the renewed Royal Alberta Museum that will truly capture the Alberta story. The Alberta story will also be told abroad as Alberta becomes the first part of Canada to ever be featured in the Smithsonian Institution's Folklife Festival in Washington, DC.

The Alberta story, more than a hundred years in the making, is still unfolding. It's the story of how hard work, faith, and determination built a province. It's the story of the aboriginal people who first knew this land, the pioneers who took a gamble on a long shot on the western prairie, and the modern-day explorers who continue to break new ground in so many fields. It's the story of how caring people, committed volunteers, and community leaders created a place that is truly the best place in the world to live, work, and raise a family.

A new chapter of the Alberta story is beginning with the start of the province's second century. No doubt it will bring its share of struggles and challenges, and Albertans will meet them as they have always done, with courage and creativity. Together we will build a future that fulfills all the promise of Alberta's first 100 years.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and may God bless you all.

God bless Alberta.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Ladies and gentlemen, all rise, please.

The Speaker: Ladies and gentlemen and hon. members, I would now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of *God Save The Queen*. Please remain standing at the conclusion.

Hon. Members and Guests:

God save our gracious Queen,
long live our noble Queen,
God save The Queen!
Send her victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us:
God save The Queen!

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order!

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Their Honours, their party, and the Premier left the Chamber as a fanfare of trumpets sounded]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

[The Mace was uncovered]

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

head: **Introduction of Bills**

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Bill 1
Alberta Cancer Prevention Legacy Act

Mr. Klein: Mr. Speaker, thank you so very, very much. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has just described the government's goal for Alberta to become a leading centre for cancer expertise in North America and to use that expertise so that Albertans can have a cancer-free future. It's most fitting that the signature bill of this session be legislation designed to achieve that goal, to create a cancer prevention legacy in this province. It will be a legacy like none other. It will be a legacy that will have a direct impact on the lives of our children, our grandchildren, and our great-grandchildren. It will mean lives saved and pain spared for thousands of people both here in Alberta and beyond.

With that goal in mind I am privileged to stand and request leave to introduce Bill 1, which is the Alberta Cancer Prevention Legacy Act. Mr. Speaker, this being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 1 will help Alberta attack cancer aggressively at every level, from prevention to potential cures. The bill confirms Alberta's commitment to address the growing demand for cancer services both now and into the future. It supports a strategic investment in the collaborative work of cancer prevention, screening, and research. Cancer will be prevented because of expanded and new cancer screening programs to detect signs of cancer at an early stage. A virtual research institute will be created to co-ordinate all cancer research in Alberta. Alberta's reputation as a world leader in cancer research, prevention, and screening will grow because of the opportunities presented through this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I needn't tell you that cancer is a terrible illness that is a leading cause of death in Alberta and, indeed, in Canada and around the world. We must take action now to stop its growth.

It's my honour today, Mr. Speaker, to introduce Bill 1, the Alberta Cancer Prevention Legacy Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

head: **Tablings**

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

head: **Motions**

Mr. Klein: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration on Thursday, February 23, 2006.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that pursuant to Standing Order 49(1) the select standing committees for the present session of the Legislative Assembly be appointed for the following purposes:

(1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund,
(2) Legislative Offices,
(3) Private Bills,
(4) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, and
(5) Public Accounts.

[Motion carried]

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, I would move that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's five standing committees:

(1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, nine members: Mr. Liepert, chair; Mr. Rogers, deputy chair; Mr. Cao; Mr. Goudreau; Mr. MacDonald; Mrs. Mather; Mr. McFarland; Mr. Pham; and Mr. Snelgrove.
(2) Legislative Offices, 11 members: Mrs. Tarchuk, chair; Mr. Ducharme, deputy chair; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Flaherty; Mr. Griffiths; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Magnus; Mr. Marz; Dr. Pannu; Mr. Rodney; and Mr. Strang.
(3) Private Bills, 21 members: Dr. Brown, chair; Mr. Liepert, deputy chair; Mr. Agnihotri; Ms DeLong; Mr. Eggen, Mr. Elsalhy; Mr. Groeneveld; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Johnston; Mr. Lindsay; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. Mitzel; Dr. Morton; Mr. Oberle; Mr. Pham; Mr. Prins; Mr. Rodney; Mr. Shariff; Dr. Swann; Mr. Tougas; and Mr. VanderBurg.
(4) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, 21 members: Ms Haley, chair; Mr. Cao, deputy chair; Reverend Abbott; Mr. Amery; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Danyluk; Ms DeLong; Mr. Flaherty; Mr. Groeneveld; Mr. Herard; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Knight; Mr. Liepert; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. MacDonald; Mr. Marz; Mr. Mitzel; Dr. Pannu; Ms Pastoor; and Mr. Zwozdesky.
(5) Public Accounts, 17 members: Mr. MacDonald, chair; Mr. VanderBurg, deputy chair; Reverend Abbott; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Bonko; Mr. Chase; Mr. Danyluk; Mr. Eggen; Mr. Griffiths; Mr. Johnston; Mr. Lindsay; Dr. Morton; Mr. Oberle; Mr. Prins; Mr. Rodney; Mr. Rogers; and Mr. Webber.

[Motion carried]

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, I'd move that the Assembly stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; at 3:52 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, March 7, 2007** **3:00 p.m.**
Date: 07/03/07
The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated February 14, 2007, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly to convene on this date]

The Clerk: Please be seated.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! Order! Mr. Speaker.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Speaker, accompanied by the officers of the Assembly, entered the Chamber and took the chair]

head: **Prayers**

The Speaker: To all hon. members, welcome home, and to all those present as guests, welcome to your Alberta Legislative Assembly. Would you join me now in the opening day prayer.

Almighty God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Your blessings on all here present. We ask Your guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all of our judgments for the benefit of all Albertans. Amen.

Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, I would now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of our national anthem. Would you please join us in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members and Guests:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, 2006 was a very exciting year for the Alberta Legislative Assembly as we celebrated 100 years of democracy in this province. Over the last century the people and events that shaped this province were deserving of celebration and recognition, and it seems only fitting that as the year came to an end, we saw another historic moment take place, on December 14, 2006, the swearing-in of Alberta's 13th Premier, the Hon. Edward Michael Stelmach.

Premier Stelmach is no stranger to history and the significance it plays in our lives. He and his delightful wife, Marie, raised their four children on the homestead which was first settled by his grandfather, Nicholas Stelmach, in 1898. History and tradition are an important part of our new Premier's life, just as they are valued by this Assembly.

In terms of public service our new Premier also has had an impressive history. In this House he has served as minister of international and intergovernmental relations, minister of transportation, minister of infrastructure, and minister of agriculture, food and rural development. In his community he has served as a county reeve and school trustee and has held numerous other committee positions and memberships on boards and in organizations within his constituency.

From the date that Premier Edward Michael Stelmach was sworn in as our province's newest Premier, his every move and his every word will become part of Alberta's political history. There is no telling what that future history might include, but looking back in his speech from the December 14 swearing-in, his words may foretell that future when he said, "We have the means to build a stronger province and future . . . the future we want for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren." Today in this Assembly I hope we can all agree that that is the future we want and that years from now it is the history we want to look back on.

On behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta I welcome you, Mr. Premier, and you, Mrs. Stelmach, Alberta's First Lady, as you take your place in this Legislature as Alberta's 13th Premier and Alberta's 13th First Lady. [Standing ovation]

head: **Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor**

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

The Speaker: Hon. members, this past year the Canadian Forces, and Canada's army in particular, have confronted challenges not seen since Korea. The successes in Afghanistan of our highly motivated young people in uniform are deserving of greater recognition. So, too, are their sacrifices. Today in the Speaker's gallery there are three junior, noncommissioned officers from the Edmonton Garrison, who are here representing those members of our armed forces who have been to Afghanistan and may well return to that country. I'd ask each to rise in turn and remain standing as I introduce them.

From the first battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Master Corporal Peter MacLean, who is married with seven children and who has deployed on four operational tours, including Kosovo, Bosnia, and Afghanistan in 2004 and 2006; Corporal Gordon Whitton, who has served twice in Afghanistan and who was awarded a mention in dispatches. The mother of two teenage boys, Corporal Kimberly Smith-Samms completed her first overseas deployment, which was to Afghanistan, in August 2006.

It is also very appropriate to recognize Master Corporal Paul Franklin, who is seated on the floor of the Chamber. Members may recall that this gallant young soldier lost both legs as a result of a suicide bomb attack in Kandahar.

It's a remarkable testament to their character, their fortitude, and their common beliefs in the values we share as Canadians that each of these soldiers would serve again in that distant land. Let us remain mindful that our Canadian Forces are the essential guarantors of the freedoms and peace we are so fortunate to enjoy. Their hard-won successes contribute to a higher humanity in places that have seen little but strife and conflict. We are very proud of them all. [Standing ovation]

The Royal Canadian Artillery Band will now play a brief musical interlude, the details of which are in your program. The RCA Band, Canada's oldest regular army band, was founded in Quebec City in 1879. It was subsequently stationed in Montreal and then Halifax. It has seen service in both world wars and in Korea, and it has travelled across Canada and beyond our borders. Reconstituted in Edmonton in 1997, the band is today under the direction of Captain Brian Greenwood, who is in the Speaker's gallery.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Ladies and gentlemen, all rise, please.

Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

The Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Norman L. Kwong, CM, AOE, and Mrs. Kwong, their party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

head: **Speech from the Throne**

The Future Is Now: A Plan for Alberta

His Honour: Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated.

Fellow Albertans, welcome to the Third Session of the 26th Alberta Legislature. I am honoured once again to deliver the Speech from the Throne.

As we continue our journey into Alberta's second century, Albertans have much to be proud of and much to look forward to. Our current prosperity is the result of foresight by Albertans whose values we honour, values such as fiscal vigilance, community spirit, and self-reliance. It is a result of a strong respect for the environment and an appreciation for lifelong learning. It is because of these shared values and through the hard work of Albertans that this province is looked to as a leader in Canada and across the globe.

Alberta is fortunate, but Albertans have made good use of the resources that nature has bestowed upon our province, and they have made wise choices, including the bold and often difficult decisions made during the past decade. Many of those decisions were made with a thoughtful eye on the future. Fellow Albertans, that future is now.

Now more than ever the government must work with Albertans to ensure that the good fortune we enjoy today is not squandered. We must respect and build on the work and the sacrifices that were made in the past. We must plan ahead to ensure that the prosperity this province enjoys today is secured for our children and grandchildren. This means making the right choices so that Alberta's economic growth remains sustainable and that the world-class quality of life Albertans enjoy includes a clean and healthy environment.

A New Approach to Working for Albertans

With a wealth of new opportunities to be seized and some tough challenges to be addressed, this government is taking a fresh look at how it works on behalf of Albertans and the priorities on which it will focus. Albertans expect their government to reflect the realities they are facing today. They expect a new approach by their government, one that recognizes the unique qualities of Albertans and their province, one that recognizes the opportunities and challenges we face. Your new government has that plan.

In carrying it out, the government will be guided by the values of Albertans. It will ensure respect for the environment and compassion for others. It will be open and accountable, fiscally responsible, and inclusive. At this unique time in our history Albertans expect their government to have a clear plan and to deliver tangible results. Ladies and gentlemen, your government will deliver on behalf of all Albertans.

Acting on Albertans' Priorities

The government of Alberta will act on Albertans' priorities to ensure a higher standard of living, greater opportunities, and an even better quality of life for all citizens of this province. The government will act thoughtfully and decisively on behalf of Albertans. The government of Alberta will govern with integrity and transparency, manage growth pressures, improve Albertans' quality of life, provide safe and secure communities, and build a stronger Alberta.

Governing with Integrity and Transparency

Governing with integrity and transparency is the first priority of this government for a deeply fundamental reason. Albertans put their highest trust in the women and men elected to represent their best interests. That trust will be honoured and respected.

Your government will introduce legislation to establish a lobbyist registry. Bill 1, the Lobbyists Act, will give all Albertans public access to information regarding individuals and organizations seeking to influence government decisions. It will also take measures to improve information provided to the public about who has contracts with government. These measures will increase transparency, openness, and accountability and will enhance public trust in the institution of government.

Your government will also review the way agencies, boards, and commissions are governed to ensure greater accountability. It will look for more efficient and productive ways of conducting the business of government, and it will look for opportunities for all parties represented in the Legislature to work together to better serve Albertans.

Managing Growth Pressures

Alberta's economy is leading the country with a record pace of development. More than half a million people have moved here from other provinces in the past half-dozen years. The government of Alberta has reinforced its determination to effectively manage the pressures that come with rapid economic growth. It will act decisively to minimize the price we are all paying for prosperity and address pressures on housing, labour, infrastructure, and the environment.

Your government recognizes that adequate housing is essential for all Albertans to share in the prosperity of their province. It has created a provincial task force to find ways to make affordable housing more accessible to Albertans. It will focus on solutions for homelessness and the provision of affordable housing.

Despite so many people moving to Alberta each year, our economy is in dire need of people to answer the calls for "help wanted" across the province. To help meet this demand, your government will focus on better co-ordination of economic development, immigration, and labour force planning. It will craft a made-in-Alberta solution to labour needs.

Like the early settlers who helped build our province, immigrants today come here with hopes of creating a better life for themselves and a better future for their children. The government of Alberta will help new Albertans realize their dreams. It will encourage them to put down roots, raise their families here, and contribute to and share in Alberta's prosperity.

Your government will increase support for First Nations and Métis skills training and labour force development so that those Albertans with the deepest roots in this province will also have more opportunities to reap the rewards of Alberta's prosperity.

The current economic growth is placing great pressure on our

province's infrastructure. Your government will develop a long-term capital plan that will address infrastructure needs and inflation costs while exploring options to fund new capital projects. It will also place great emphasis on controlled spending to ensure that Albertans get the best possible value for their tax dollars.

The government of Alberta will continue to build on its solid record in environmental management with some of the most progressive legislation and action-based strategies in the country. Working with Albertans, the government will turn current environmental challenges into new opportunities. This will enhance Alberta's standing as a leader in practical, innovative, and sustainable environmental policies.

Your government will encourage all Albertans to take personal responsibility for energy efficiency and reduced consumption because the environment is a shared responsibility between government, industry, and all members of society.

Alberta's legislation for regulating greenhouse gas emissions was the first in Canada specifically addressing climate change, but this government knows more must be done. This spring the government of Alberta will introduce legislation that will complete implementation of Alberta's groundbreaking climate change plan. It will establish greenhouse gas emission intensity targets for industry under the specified gas emitters regulation. These will be the first legislated emission intensity reduction targets for large industrial emitters in Canada.

At the same time, the government will work with Albertans to outline its next steps on this important issue. By fall 2007 Alberta will have a new climate change action plan to move beyond what's been accomplished so far.

To maintain our high quality of life, it is essential that Albertans properly manage our province's water supplies. The government of Alberta's Water for Life strategy is North America's most comprehensive water management plan. Since 2003 it has provided Alberta with an action plan to manage water supplies during this time of unprecedented economic growth. It is essential to ensure that this plan is based on current realities. Later this year the Alberta Water Council will consult with Albertans on updating the Water for Life strategy and provide recommendations to government by year-end.

Your government will introduce strategies and provide new funding to respond to growth pressures related to the development of Alberta's oil sands. As a first big step the government of Alberta has committed almost $400 million in new funding over the next three years to complete new water and waste-water treatment facilities, develop 300 affordable housing units, and address health pressures in the Wood Buffalo region. It will also create an oil sands sustainable development secretariat to better plan and co-ordinate delivery of services as this important resource is developed. In addition, the Oil Sands Multi-Stakeholder Committee will complete its work and recommend strategies and policies, based on Albertans' input, to guide future development.

Your government will also complete its land-use framework, which will guide the way to balancing the economic, environmental, and social needs of Albertans. These initiatives will mark the beginning of a new era in managing the overall environmental effects of development. It will blend Alberta's environment-related policies, including Water for Life, the climate change action plan, and the land-use framework, to ensure that Alberta's environment continues to be protected.

head: Improving Albertans' Quality of Life

Albertans have told their government that economic prosperity must not come at the expense of quality of life, and the government of Alberta is listening. It will ensure that services, programs, and infrastructure are in place to maintain Albertans' high quality of life.

Albertans have always placed a high value on learning, and this government recognizes that education is key to improving quality of life. Your government will continue to look for innovative ways to improve Alberta's outstanding K to 12 education system. It will work with community partners, school boards, and educators to develop effective strategies that support teachers, parents, students, and administrators in continuing to provide a first-rate learning environment.

Your government will also increase access and quality in postsecondary education while strengthening its support for community education and literacy programs. It will work to improve high school completion rates and increase access to postsecondary education with an emphasis on the Campus Alberta approach. The government will ensure that Alberta's postsecondary institutions have defined roles and responsibilities within a comprehensive advanced learning system. Investments in advanced education will be targeted towards a comprehensive framework that will make postsecondary education, trade and occupational training more accessible to adult learners.

The government of Alberta will continue to encourage and support Albertans in taking steps to improve and maintain individual, family, and community health. A sustained focus on wellness, injury reduction, and disease prevention combined with efforts to improve productivity and accountability in health care delivery will provide the framework to ensure a sustainable public health care system.

Building the health workforce of the future will be a top priority. Albertans will see stronger emphasis on primary health care and self-management of chronic diseases through the provision of information, resources, and support.

The government of Alberta will assist people living in the community with serious mental illness, and their families, with improved access to support services and treatment. A new pharmaceutical strategy will capitalize on opportunities to improve the range of drugs available and to reduce or avoid costs. Your government will work to expand long-term care capacity, improve standards, and ensure that facilities and supports are available to seniors as the population ages. Your government will continue to improve the quality of life in First Nations and Métis communities, and it will ensure that government policies better reflect the needs of persons with disabilities.

This province is known as one of the best places to live and raise a family, in large part because of the spirit of community that Albertans cherish. Albertans value compassion, and they take pride in coming together to volunteer time and money to help others in need. Reflecting these values, the government of Alberta will lead the creation of a community spirit program for charitable giving. The program will support increases for private charitable donations through tax credits and establish a community spirit fund to provide matching grants for eligible donations to Alberta-based registered charities. The government will establish an all-party MLA committee to guide the creation of this program.

Providing Safe and Secure Communities

Albertans place a high priority on living in a peaceful society, where laws are respected and consideration for others is practised. They want to be assured that their communities will remain safe and secure as the province undergoes rapid growth and change. The Alberta government will act on this priority. It will work with communities to make neighbourhoods stronger and safer.

To this end, your government will work with community leaders

to establish a crime reduction and safe communities task force that will consult with Albertans on how to reduce crime and improve public confidence in the justice system. This initiative will build on the work being done by 13 partnering government ministries to develop and implement an integrated crime reduction strategy. Through this collaboration the province will see a future in which Albertans experience less crime, feel less fearful of crime, and work together to make their communities safer.

Building a Stronger Alberta

Albertans and their government know that the province's economic success must not be taken for granted. The Alberta government will act now to build an even stronger Alberta. It will conduct an open and transparent review of the resource royalty system through an independent committee recently established. At the end of the review Albertans must be confident that the right system is in place, one that is fair to both industry and to Albertans, who own the resources.

Your government will also develop strategies to ensure that Albertans have long-term access to reliable and diverse sources of energy for homes, small businesses, and larger industries, and it will encourage the upgrading and refining of nonrenewable resources in Alberta to obtain maximum value for Albertans and to create new business opportunities and long-term jobs.

The government of Alberta will develop a comprehensive energy strategy, which will ensure the sustainable development of the province's resources in an environmentally responsible manner, making full use of innovations such as near zero emission coal. The strategy will look at all of Alberta's energy resources with a focus on renewable resources, including electricity generated by wind and bioenergy such as ethanol and other biofuels. Development in these areas will provide new opportunities for rural Alberta and the agriculture community. While much of the focus on sustainable development is directed at industry, individual Albertans must play their part as well to promote energy efficiency and reduce consumption.

A strong Alberta requires strong municipalities. This government recognizes that municipalities provide many of the day-to-day services upon which Albertans rely. Your government has therefore renewed efforts to work with municipalities to better serve Albertans. This includes developing a long-term funding arrangement that is sustainable and recognizes the challenges municipalities have in raising revenues to provide essential services on the front lines of Alberta's tremendous growth. This co-operative effort has already yielded results that will benefit all Albertans. The provincial government has committed an additional $1.4 billion in annual funding to municipalities, which will be phased in over the next four years.

Albertans want to be sure that revenues they entrust to their provincial government are used prudently to build a stronger Alberta today and for generations to come. Your government is taking action by developing a surplus management policy that reflects Albertans' long-term priorities. Details of this policy will be announced with the 2007 provincial budget.

Your government will ensure that savings are targeted to the province's future needs. It will strengthen the governance of its investments so that the funds Albertans entrust to it are managed most effectively.

The Alberta government will also establish an institute for agriculture, forestry, and the environment, which will put research and innovation to practical, real-world use to benefit Albertans and the environment. The institute will develop market-based solutions to environmental sustainability challenges surrounding agriculture and renewable resource sectors such as forestry. As all Albertans know, much of Alberta's economic strength is based on natural resources.

To ensure that Alberta remains prosperous for future generations, it is essential to seize the opportunity now to further strengthen and diversify our economy. Your government will build on Alberta's traditional strengths, which include energy, agriculture, forestry, tourism, and the people of this province. It will build on these strengths to develop a robust knowledge-based economy to compete in world markets.

The Alberta government will develop a long-term strategy for technology commercialization and economic diversification. It will continue to focus on research in priority areas of energy, information and communications technology, and life sciences. In addition, it will place an increased emphasis on nanotechnology, the science of small. Research in this field has the potential to impact every sector of our economy and to diversify and sustain Alberta's prosperity for generations. Led by world-class researchers at the National Institute for Nanotechnology in Edmonton, our province is positioned to become an international leader in this field.

Conclusion

Fellow Albertans, the government of Alberta is making a solemn commitment to you. In all that it does, it will reflect your values and act on your priorities. It will conduct itself with the recognition that it is an honour and a privilege to serve as government, not a right, and that it must continuously earn that privilege. Your government will listen to and work with Albertans because together we can do great things.

We are faced with a unique opportunity to build for the future and to secure the long-term prosperity of our great province. Your government has a solid plan to accomplish these goals. It will take full advantage of that opportunity.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and may God bless you all.

God bless Alberta.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise, please.

The Speaker: Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, I would now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of *God Save The Queen*. Please remain standing at the conclusion.

Hon. Members and Guests:

God save our gracious Queen,
long live our noble Queen,
God save The Queen!
Send her victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us:
God save The Queen!

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order!

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Their Honours, their party, and the Premier left the Chamber as a fanfare of trumpets sounded]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

[The Mace was uncovered]

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

head: **Introduction of Bills**

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Bill 1
Lobbyists Act

Mr. Stelmach: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 1, the Lobbyists Act.

One of our top five priorities is governing with integrity and transparency, and this act, the Lobbyists Act, is an example of our commitment to this principle. Our commitment to openness in government, openness in business dealings is demonstrated in three ways through the Lobbyists Act: first, by establishing a lobbyist registry; secondly, by requiring lobbyists to declare existing contracts they have to give advice to government; and lastly, by regularly publishing an online, searchable index of who has contracts with the government. One of the key features of the legislation is the prohibition from lobbying and providing advice to government on the same issue at the same time.

The lobbyist registry will be administered by the Ethics Commissioner. It will be fully accessible on the Internet and will identify the subject matter of each lobbying activity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

head: **Tablings**

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

head: **Motions**

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration on Thursday, March 8, 2007.

[Motion carried]

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, I would move that pursuant to Standing Order 52(1) the select standing committees for the present session of the Legislative Assembly be appointed for the following purposes:

(1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund,
(2) Legislative Offices,
(3) Private Bills,
(4) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, and
(5) Public Accounts.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's five standing committees:

(1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund: Mr. Johnston, chair; Mr. Rogers, deputy chair; Mr. Doerksen; Mr. Griffiths; Mr. MacDonald; Mr. Magnus; Mr. Mar; Mrs. Mather; and Mr. Pham.
(2) Legislative Offices: Mr. Rodney, chair; Mr. Magnus, deputy chair; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Cao; Mr. Coutts; Mr. Ducharme; Mr. Flaherty; Mr. Marz; Mr. McFarland; Dr. Pannu; and Mr. VanderBurg.
(3) Private Bills: Ms DeLong, chair; Dr. Brown, deputy chair; Reverend Abbott; Mr. Agnihotri; Mr. Amery; Ms Calahasen; Mr. Doerksen; Mr. Dunford; Mr. Eggen; Mr. Elsalhy; Mrs. Jablonski; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. Mitzel; Mr. Pham; Mr. Prins; Mr. Rogers; Mr. Shariff; Dr. Swann; and Mr. Tougas.
(4) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing: Mr. Zwozdesky, chair; Mr. Johnson, deputy chair; Reverend Abbott; Mr. Amery; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Cardinal; Mr. Cenaiko; Mr. Flaherty; Mrs. Forsyth; Mrs. Fritz; Mr. Griffiths; Mr. Hancock; Mr. Herard; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. MacDonald; Mr. Marz; Mr. Mitzel; Mr. Oberle; Dr. Pannu; and Ms Pastoor.
(5) Public Accounts: Mr. MacDonald, chair; Mr. Prins, deputy chair; Mr. Bonko; Dr. Brown; Mr. Cardinal; Mr. Cenaiko; Mr. Chase; Ms DeLong; Mr. Dunford; Mr. Eggen; Mrs. Forsyth; Mr. Herard; Mr. Johnston, Mr. R. Miller; Mr. Rodney; Mr. Strang; and Mr. Webber.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move that the Assembly stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; at 3:57 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, March 2, 2005** **3:00 p.m.**
Date: 05/03/02
The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! Order! Mr. Speaker.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Speaker, accompanied by the officers of the Assembly, entered the Chamber and took the chair]

head: **Prayers**

The Speaker: Good afternoon and welcome.

Almighty God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Your blessings on all here present. We ask Your guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all of our judgments for the benefit of all Albertans. Amen.

Ladies and gentlemen and hon. members, I would now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of our national anthem. Please join us in the language of your choice. At the conclusion of the anthem I would ask that you remain standing.

Hon. Members and Guests:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

Hon. Dr. Lois E. Hole, CM, AOE

The Speaker: Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, on January 6, 2005, the late the Hon. Dr. Lois E. Hole, CM, AOE, the 15th Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, passed away following a courageous battle with cancer. Her Honour served with grace and dignity as Alberta's Lieutenant Governor from 2000 to 2005.

Her Honour was well known in various local, provincial, and national organizations and was recognized for her contribution to libraries, education, and the arts.

To Mrs. Hole's family and those who knew her I extend the condolences of the Assembly. Members of Her Honour's family are with us today in the Speaker's gallery.

In memory of Her Honour I ask you to join me in a moment of silent prayer and remembrance.

Rest eternal grant unto her, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon her. Amen.

Please be seated.

head: **Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor**

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

The Speaker: Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, prior to the arrival of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor the Royal Canadian Artillery Band will play a brief musical interlude.

The RCA Band, Canada's oldest regular army band, was formed in Quebec City in 1879. It was subsequently stationed in Montreal and Halifax. It has seen service in both world wars and in Korea, and it has travelled across Canada and beyond our borders. Reconstituted in Edmonton in 1997, the band is today under the direction of Captain Brian Greenwood, CD, who is in the Speaker's gallery.

The band will now play a piece written by baroque composer George Frederick Handel, the details of which are in your program.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Ladies and gentlemen, all rise, please.

Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

The Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Norman L. Kwong, CM, AOE, his party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

His Honour: Pray be seated.

The Speaker: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfill the important duties thus assigned to me. If in the performance of those duties I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not the Assembly, whose servant I am and who through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duties to the Queen and province, humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to your person at all seasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from you the most favourable construction.

Mr. Stevens (Provincial Secretary): Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of this Assembly to Her Majesty's person and government, and not doubting that the proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temperance, and prudence, he grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow the Assembly's constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the Assembly shall have ready access to His Honour upon all seasonable occasions and that all proceedings as well as your words and actions will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.

head: **Speech from the Throne**

His Honour: Fellow Albertans, it is my privilege to welcome you to the First Session of the 26th Alberta Legislature.

The Next Alberta

It is my great honour to deliver the Speech from the Throne as it is my great honour to serve as this province's Lieutenant Governor. [applause] In this role I have big shoes to fill, or perhaps I should say big rubber boots. My predecessor, the late the Honourable Lois Hole, was much beloved by Albertans. She brought warmth, grace, kindness, and compassion to this office. She personified the very best qualities of this province.

I had the honour and privilege of meeting Bill and Valerie and Jim and Marcia this afternoon and know that their mother's qualities are carried on in the family.

All of us here can do no less than endeavour to follow Mrs. Hole's example. We must strive to fulfill the duties of our offices with diligence and dignity. We must respect each other even when we disagree. Above all, we must always remember the people we serve and act in ways that will bring honour to them and this province, as she did.

This year the government will establish lasting tributes to Lois Hole. Later on I will announce two initiatives in recognition of Mrs. Hole's dedication to libraries and learning. The government will also celebrate the late Lieutenant Governor's first love, gardening, with the creation of a memorial garden on the grounds of the Alberta Legislature. There will be a seating area where visitors can enjoy the beauty of the garden and the grounds. The garden will be named after Lois Hole and will include a cairn with a plaque featuring her portrait and biographical highlights of her life and legacy.

During this centennial year we will also remember the legacies of the many other great Albertans who came before us, and we will celebrate the wonderful province they helped to build.

The Centennial: A Century of Achievement

It's amazing to think of how far Alberta has come from its roots 100 years ago. Back in 1905 Alberta's population was only 185,000, much smaller than that of either Saskatchewan or Manitoba, and the people were outnumbered by the livestock. There were nearly a quarter million horses and a million cattle in Alberta at that time.

A look back at this province's first Speech from the Throne, delivered by Lieutenant Governor George Bulyea in the First Legislature at McKay Avenue school, shows some surprising similarities with the business that concerns us today. Mr. Bulyea noted, as I also will, the importance of agriculture to the province. He spoke about the pressures a rapidly growing population puts on infrastructure, pressures we continue to face today. Back in 1905 Alberta was developing a telephone system, while 2005 will see the completion of the SuperNet.

The people who heard Lieutenant Governor Bulyea's words couldn't have known all the struggles they would face. They didn't know how difficult it would be to build the roads, bridges, and railroad tracks that would connect this province to the rest of the country. They didn't know that fires, floods, and droughts were on their way. They didn't know that many of their sons and daughters would give their lives building this province and this country and defending it overseas.

What they did know was that theirs was a land blessed with beauty and natural resources. They knew they would have to work hard to turn the land's promise into prosperity. They knew that with provincehood came great responsibility. It was a responsibility they willingly accepted, and together they built a strong, vibrant province.

Today all Albertans owe a debt of gratitude to those who came before us: to the aboriginal people, whose deep connection to this land spans generations and centuries; to our seniors, who laid the foundations for the communities that took root all across this province and made it home; to the settlers, who came from all over the world to make a fresh start here, often bringing nothing more with them than dreams and determination; to those who fought for this nation in armed conflicts; and to everyone who had faith in this province and what it could become. The fruits of their labours are all around us.

Alberta now enters its second century with a strong economy, no debt, nation-leading rates of growth and employment, a high standard of living, and an enviable quality of life. The credit for all these achievements rests with Albertans themselves, and they are indeed achievements worth celebrating in this centennial year.

Albertans will mark the centennial in ways that are as grand and unique as Alberta itself. Among the highlights of the province's centennial celebrations will be a visit from Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh this spring.

In honour of the centennial a new graduate scholarship and fellowship program will be established. Beginning in the next school year 200 students enrolled in full-time masters programs in Alberta will each receive a $9,300 scholarship, and 100 students enrolled in full-time PhD programs will each receive a $10,500 fellowship. A total of 300 students will receive nearly $3 million through this program, a number that will grow with the number of graduate students in Alberta.

Another way Alberta will mark its centennial is by presenting centennial medallions to all schoolchildren and to Albertans who are 100 years or older.

As Albertans celebrate the province's past, they will also look ahead with enthusiasm to the next Alberta, the Alberta our children and grandchildren will inherit. My government's goal is to make sure that the next Alberta is even better than the Alberta of today.

The Next Alberta Will Be a Leader in Learning

That's why the next Alberta will continue to be a leader in learning. The children of Alberta already benefit from one of the best education systems in the world. Its success is due to dedicated students, outstanding teachers, and a high-quality curriculum. Alberta will continue to invest in its children's futures by supporting initiatives that build on the strong foundation of the kindergarten through grade 12 system and enhance learning opportunities for students across the province.

Previous efforts to strengthen the education system are already showing results: class sizes are coming down and will meet the Learning Commission guidelines two years ahead of schedule, and our students continue to outperform their peers on national and international tests.

Now it's time to make sure that the province's postsecondary education system is able to meet the needs of the next Alberta. A strong postsecondary education system is crucial for continued economic diversification, growth, and prosperity as well as personal fulfillment. Strengthening the postsecondary learning system is the government's top priority during this centennial year.

The government is taking immediate action to improve access to advanced education. Over the next three years 15,000 new spaces will be added to the postsecondary system. In six years that will double to 30,000 new spaces. By 2020 a total of 60,000 new spaces will be created. Our goal with this bold expansion plan is to move Albertans to the highest rate of postsecondary education in the country.

Particular attention will be paid to increasing training opportunities in areas experiencing skills shortages. Government will invest in new apprenticeship certification programs. Investment will also be directed to new apprenticeship training initiatives, particularly for aboriginal people. It will bring opportunities closer to the learner by exploring increased use of alternate delivery training mechanisms such as distance learning and mobile delivery to rural communities.

This government will also make advanced education more affordable. The government will pay the full cost of tuition increases at Alberta's public postsecondary learning institutions for the 2005-06 academic year. It will also create a new policy, the most innovative, entrepreneurial, and affordable in the country, to ensure that tuition and schooling costs aren't a barrier to learning in Alberta.

The first legislation introduced during this session will call for a

significant new investment in the postsecondary learning system. Bill 1, the Access to the Future Act, aligns government's fiscal strategy with its 20-year strategic plan. It will lay the groundwork for investments that will allow Alberta to continue to prosper in the increasingly globalized, knowledge-based economy.

The signature piece of this act will allow for the creation of a $3 billion endowment fund to sustain Alberta's postsecondary education system into the future. The access to the future fund will support innovation and excellence in postsecondary education. For example, it will provide matching contributions to help create a new centre for Chinese studies at the University of Alberta. This landmark institute will promote greater understanding of the culture, language, and history of one of the world's largest economies and a country with which this province has long enjoyed a special relationship.

The new fund will also support the development of an Alberta-wide digital library that will allow all students and faculty, wherever they are located in the province, to access the resources and knowledge currently held in the individual libraries of our postsecondary institutions. To be named the Lois Hole digital library, this leading-edge initiative is centred on the work already under way at the University of Calgary. The government will also create the Lois Hole humanities and social sciences scholarship. Beginning in the next academic year four students will each receive a $5,000 scholarship toward his or her postsecondary studies.

This government is committed to removing obstacles from the path of any Albertan who wants to get an education, whether it's from a university, college, or technical institution, and it will show its commitment through its actions.

The Next Alberta Will Have a Diverse and Growing Economy

Having an educated workforce is key to ensuring continued prosperity in the next Alberta. We know that a strong economy is not an end unto itself; rather, it is the means to achieve the things we want as a society such as strong health and education systems and supports for those who are vulnerable. This government remains committed to the fiscal principles that have served the province so well: balanced budgets, no debt, and low taxes. These principles have made Alberta the economic leader of the nation. We're at the head of the pack, and we're staying there.

Growth brings its own challenges, and among them are tremendous pressures on infrastructure. This government will maintain one of the most aggressive infrastructure programs in Canada to make sure Albertans have the roads, schools, hospitals, and facilities they need.

Work will begin this year on the southeast portion of the Edmonton ring road thanks to a public/private partnership that will see the road's completion in just two and a half years. Government will explore continued use of this innovative form of financing for large capital projects as it aims to complete the ring roads around Edmonton and Calgary within the next decade.

Secondary highways are also critical to the province's continued economic growth. These roads are vital links to and between rural communities, and many are long overdue for improvements. This year the government will increase its investment in this area to rehabilitate and upgrade more provincial highways throughout the province.

Our government will work with municipal partners by allocating the $3 billion that has been committed to address municipal infrastructure needs beginning in Budget 2005.

Now that the province's debt has been paid off, the government will begin inflation-proofing the Alberta heritage savings trust fund to ensure that it is sustained as a legacy for future generations.

We will take steps to protect consumers by strengthening legislation on collection practices, credit reporting, public auctions, and loan brokering. We will also introduce standardized, plain language contracts for residential natural gas and electricity consumers.

Alberta will continue to implement its water for life strategy this year, including developing a provincial plan for water conservation in partnership with the Alberta Water Council.

We will increase consultation with aboriginal people on resource development and land access issues to help them participate fully in the growing economy.

This government will continue to stand by agricultural producers, who face the future with renewed optimism. The economic hardships of recent years have prompted improvements to the agriculture sector, including increased domestic processing capacity and the expansion of value-added products, which will make the industry more competitive than ever.

We will work to strengthen this vital sector by continuing to advocate for marketing choice for wheat and barley. The global marketplace is demanding that we move to a more competitive marketing system. Alberta will push for a new business model for the Canadian Wheat Board, one with market choice, so that Alberta farmers can be more competitive in the value-added market.

Vibrant rural communities are vital to this province. That's why this government will act on the recommendations of the rural development strategy to sustain and strengthen the rural economy.

Much as the land sustains the agriculture industry, it also sustains other economic mainstays such as energy, forestry, and tourism. Wise land management is crucial to ensure the sustainability of these sectors and continued prosperity for Albertans. That's why this government will develop a land-use management framework supported by effective resource and environmental policies and shared, integrated information systems. It will also continue to leverage energy resources to their full value.

The government will explore ways for the economy to be more knowledge based by adding value to primary resource industries and expanding manufacturing and business services.

Taking a co-ordinated approach will help protect the province's environment and ensure that all the province's resources are wisely managed with their benefits maximized for future generations.

The Next Alberta Will Be the Healthiest Province in Canada

Having a strong economy gives Alberta the ability to invest in areas like health care, but Albertans and indeed all Canadians know that if simply adding money to the system were enough, the challenges in health care would have been resolved long ago. The days of endlessly studying and debating health care reform are over, and the time for action is here. That's why Albertans will pioneer a new way of health care.

Alberta's third way for health care is about making sure Albertans get the best health care services, what they need and when they need it, at a price taxpayers can afford. We're going to get on with the things that need to be done such as developing systems to improve wait-list management and allowing electronic referrals between family physicians and specialists. We'll make whatever legislative changes are needed to allow innovation to occur throughout the health system.

We'll keep looking at new ideas. In May Alberta will host an international symposium to examine best practices in health care

delivery. The symposium will give Albertans an opportunity to examine a range of solutions that could benefit our province.

And we'll take steps to make Albertans the healthiest people in the world because even the best medical treatments aren't as good as staying healthy in the first place. The government will work with community partners to find new ways of encouraging Albertans to make health and wellness part of their daily lives. We will examine a range of wellness strategies promoting healthy outcomes for all Albertans.

The government will introduce daily physical activity in schools for grades 1 through 9 beginning this fall. It will also introduce a wellness initiative starting at the kindergarten level beginning in 2006 to help foster a lifelong commitment to healthy and active living in students.

We will take steps to manage future health risks. The government will develop a plan to reduce the unacceptably high number of deaths and injuries on Alberta's streets and highways. We will invest in water infrastructure to provide a safe, clean water supply, and we will complete an emergency response plan for communicable disease emergencies.

All Albertans
Will Share in the Alberta Advantage

Albertans are caring, compassionate people who want every member of this province to have the opportunity to share in the Alberta advantage both today and in the next Alberta. This means making sure that Albertans are protected in their workplaces and that they feel safe and secure in their communities.

This year the government will review employment standards to make sure that the laws dealing with overtime, vacation, hours of work, and other workplace standards are current and relevant. It will raise the minimum wage to $7 per hour, a rate that reflects the strength of Alberta's economy. Albertans are being consulted about whether this increase should be phased in or introduced all at once. We will work closely with affected employers to see that the impact on business is minimized.

Following the review of the assured income for the severely handicapped program, government will increase financial benefits for program recipients. Details of these changes will be announced during this legislative session.

This spring we will implement programs to provide dental and optical assistance to seniors and help cover annual increases in the education portion of their property taxes.

We will also review the Dependent Adults Act and revise accommodation standards for long-term care and seniors' housing.

Government will update the Police Act to enhance civilian oversight of police services. The province will continue to be the leading voice in pushing the federal government for conditional sentencing reform. Our position on this issue is very clear: in order to maintain the public's confidence in the justice system, those convicted of serious offences must face real jail time.

We will fight to protect our children from crimes such as sexual exploitation. The government will introduce an education campaign to help prevent sexual exploitation of young people through Internet luring, child pornography, and child prostitution.

Government will strive to reduce family violence through effective interventions, including treatment, through the province's specialized domestic violence courts. Increased emphasis will be placed on training police and Crown prosecutors to investigate and prosecute family violence cases more effectively.

The system of parent link centres will be expanded, and Alberta will become the first province in Canada to introduce a child care worker accreditation program.

We will also continue to fulfill our commitment to children through Alberta's Promise and encourage all sectors of our communities to contribute their time, volunteer efforts, and finances to benefit young people.

These initiatives and others will help Albertans who are vulnerable receive the supports they need to participate fully in the social, economic, and cultural life of the province.

The Next Alberta
Will Be a Leader in Canada and the World

In these past hundred years Alberta has grown from humble roots. It's gone from being a long shot on the Canadian prairie to becoming a magnet for modern-day pioneers from all around the world. It's gone from being a rough-edged frontier to offering among the best qualities of life of any province in Canada, with world-class museums and libraries, breathtaking parks and recreational opportunities, and a vibrant arts and cultural scene. It's gone from being the new kid at the Canadian family's table to playing a major role on the national stage, and Albertans are ready to play an even bigger role in Canada because, as this province's 100-year history illustrates so unmistakably, Albertans have what it takes to be leaders.

Like those who were faced with the task of building this province back in 1905, Albertans today cannot know what challenges lie ahead. We know only that we will meet them, as Albertans have always done, with courage, innovation, and determination. We live in a land rich in blessings, and like those who came before us, we are willing to work hard to make it even better for those who will follow us.

This centennial year people across Alberta will celebrate the amazing province we call home, and from this firm foundation we will look ahead to the prospect of building something even greater: the next Alberta.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and may God bless you all.

God bless Alberta.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

The Speaker: Thank you, Your Honour.

Please remain standing, ladies and gentlemen. I'd now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of *God Save The Queen*. Please remain standing at the conclusion.

Hon. Members and Guests:

God save our gracious Queen,
long live our noble Queen,
God save The Queen!
Send her victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us:
God save The Queen!

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order!

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour, his party, and the Premier left the Chamber as a fanfare of trumpets sounded]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

[The Mace was uncovered]

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

head: **Introduction of Bills**

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Bill 1
Access to the Future Act

Mr. Klein: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As His Honour the Lieutenant Governor so aptly pointed out, this year Alberta celebrates the accomplishments of its past with the 100th anniversary of this province. It is most appropriate in this Alberta centennial year that the signature bill for the first legislative session of Alberta's second century focuses on postsecondary education. In the very first sitting of the Alberta Legislature 100 years ago, the government of the day passed a bill called the University bill. That bill helped set the stage for the rich heritage of higher learning in Alberta today.

In that same spirit today I request leave to introduce Bill 1, the Access to the Future Act. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, a hundred years ago Albertans knew that there is no better way to secure the future than by investing in higher learning. The Albertans of 2005 know the same to be true today.

Bill 1 lays out a solid and comprehensive plan for taking Alberta's advanced education system to a new level of excellence. It confirms this government's commitment to an affordable, accessible, and high-quality postsecondary education. I've said on many occasions in recent months that this government doesn't want Albertans' young people to have to go elsewhere for a postsecondary education. We don't want any students turned away because they can't afford the cost of tuition. We want to ensure that Alberta has the best advanced education system in the country. Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what Bill 1 will help us achieve. It's about investing in this province's future, it's about ensuring that all Albertans have access to educational opportunities, and it's about securing a bright and promising future for Alberta's children and grandchildren.

Therefore, it is my honour and my privilege today to introduce Bill 1, the Access to the Future Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

head: **Tablings**

The Speaker: I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

Certificates of Election

The Clerk: Mr. Speaker, I've received from the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta pursuant to the Election Act two reports containing results of the general election conducted on the 22nd day of November 2004. The first report states that an election was conducted in the following electoral divisions, and the said report further shows that the following members were duly elected.

[The Clerk read the election returns]

The Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the second report received from the Chief Electoral Officer pursuant to section 149 of the Election Act contains the results of the general election conducted on the 22nd day of November 2004 for the electoral division of Edmonton-Castle Downs, and the said report declares the member duly elected as of January 24, 2005, in Edmonton-Castle Downs: Thomas Lukaszuk.

head: **Motions**

Mr. Klein: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration Thursday, March 3.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that pursuant to Standing Order 49(1) and 49(2) the standing committees and the special standing committee for the present session of the Legislative Assembly be appointed for the following purposes:

(1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund,
(2) Legislative Offices,
(3) Members' Services,
(4) Private Bills,
(5) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, and
(6) Public Accounts.

[Motion carried]

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, I would move that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's five standing committees and the special standing committee:

(1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund: Mr. Liepert, chair; Mr. Rogers, deputy chair; Mr. Cao; Mr. Goudreau; Mr. MacDonald; Mrs. Mather; Mr. McFarland; Mr. Pham; and Mr. Snelgrove.
(2) Legislative Offices: Mrs. Tarchuk, chair; Mr. Ducharme, deputy chair; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Flaherty; Mr. Griffiths; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Magnus; Mr. Marz; Dr. Pannu; Mr. Rodney; and Mr. Strang.
(3) Members' Services: Mr. Kowalski, chair; Mr. Ducharme, deputy chair; Mrs. Ady; Mr. Backs; Mr. Horner; Mrs. Jablonski; Mr. Knight; Mr. Martin; Mr. McFarland; Mr. Shariff; and Mr. Taylor.
(4) Private Bills: Dr. Brown, chair; Mr. Liepert, deputy chair; Mr. Agnihotri; Ms DeLong; Mr. Eggen, Mr. Elsalhy; Mr. Groeneveld; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Johnston; Mr. Lindsay; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. Mitzel; Dr. Morton; Mr. Oberle; Mr. Pham; Mr. Prins; Mr. Rodney; Mr. Shariff; Dr. Swann; Mr. Tougas; and Mr. VanderBurg.
(5) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing: Ms Haley, chair; Mr. Cao, deputy chair; Rev. Abbott; Mr. Amery; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Danyluk; Ms DeLong; Mr. Flaherty; Mr. Groeneveld; Mr. Herard; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Knight; Mr. Liepert; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. MacDonald; Mr. Marz; Mr. Mitzel; Dr. Pannu; Ms Pastoor; and Mr. Zwozdesky.
(6) Public Accounts: Mr. MacDonald, chair; Mr. VanderBurg, deputy chair; Rev. Abbott; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Bonko; Mr. Chase; Mr. Danyluk; Mr. Eggen; Mr. Griffiths; Mr. Johnston; Mr. Lindsay; Dr. Morton; Mr. Oberle; Mr. Prins; Mr. Rodney; Mr. Rogers; and Mr. Webber.

[Motion carried]

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Assembly stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; at 3:57 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]